

KANSAS

Kansas State Historical Society
Cultural Resources Division

KATHLEEN SEBELIUS, GOVERNOR

CERTIFICATION OF STATE REGISTER LISTING

The Register of Historic Kansas Places includes all Kansas properties nominated to the National Register as well as lower threshold properties which are listed on the state register only.

Property Name: Conrad Droge Farm

Address: 232 Township Road I, Seneca Vicinity, KS 66538

Legal:

County: Nemaha

Owner: Mr. Leslie Droge

Address: Route 1, Box 114, Seneca, KS 66538

National Register eligible _____

State Register eligible X

This property was approved by the Kansas Historic Sites Board of Review for the Register of Historic Kansas Places on May 21, 2005.

I hereby certify that this property is listed on the Register of Historic Kansas Places.



Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

5/31/05
Date

9/95

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Conrad Droge Farm
Nemaha Co., Kansas

DESCRIPTION

Summary

The Conrad Droge Farm is located one mile south of the Nebraska State line and ten miles north of Seneca, Kansas (pop. 2000), in Nemaha County, Kansas, off Kansas Highway 63. The farm is bounded on the south by Township Road "232", on the west by Township Road "I" and on the north and east by cultivated fields. The farm drapes over a ridge overlooking the valley formed by nearby Nemaha River and Turkey Creek.

The 130-acre farm was purchased in 1873 by Conrad Droge who built a one-and-one-half story "I" Stone House in 1874, added a rock wing in 1880, and further extended the wing in 1908. He built the two-story Stone Barn in 1875. A frame chicken house (1880), frame work shed (1908) one car garage (1929), shop and two car garage (1947), and silo (1950) are contributing resources to the farmstead. A new windmill is a non-contributing structure.

Elaboration

The original house built in 1874 is symmetrical with centered entry and interior paired end chimneys. The "I" house is built of native limestone, resting on a limestone foundation. The overall dimensions are 33 feet by 21 feet. Originally, the rock house had three rooms on the first floor, four rooms on the second level and full basement. It appears that the two, eight feet x nine feet rooms on the north served as bedrooms, and the thirteen feet x eighteen feet single room on the south served as the kitchen/dining room. One brick chimney is located in the middle of the south wall (original kitchen) and one brick chimney is located in the middle of the north wall (original bedrooms). Each room had a heating stove, but is now heated by propane. The eighteen-inch thick load-bearing, limestone block walls which are now plastered on the inside, separate all the rooms. A narrow, steep stair leads to four small bedrooms which are directly over the three rooms below. Each second floor bedroom has a sloping ceiling. The exposed stone walls of the second floor have recently been covered with wall board for insulation.

A new kitchen wing with an interior brick chimney on the eastern wall was built in 1880. The one-story, fifteen feet x fifteen feet rock addition was built to the eastern elevation of the original stone house. The original kitchen became a parlor while the new wing provided a dining room - kitchen, a spring room around the original hand-dug well on the south, and a lean-to porch with enclosed pantry on the north. During this remodeling, a large opening was required in the east wall of the original kitchen to provide access to the new addition. The new opening required that the stairway to the basement be moved to the area under the stairway to the second floor.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

Conrad Droge Farm
Nemaha Co., Kansas

A one-story, fifteen feet x fifteen and ½ feet stone extension was built to the eastern elevation of the 1880's room in 1908. This addition provided a more modern kitchen and the former kitchen became the dining room. This addition had a pantry and another screened porch on the north. Water was pumped from the stock tank from south of the barn to a new bathroom in the original house. In 1947 plumbing was added to the kitchen and the pantry became a utility room. The plumbing addition required that the stairway to the basement be moved to the front hall and the stairway to the second floor be constructed from a newly created hallway in the middle of the house. The northeastern bedroom of the original house was converted into a bathroom. A double garage and shop were added to the original one car garage in 1947 using recycled wood from an abandoned community schoolhouse and filling station. The eastern elevation has recently been covered with fiberboard.

The original stone house has eighteen inch thick exterior stone walls. The stone is smooth-faced, limestone blocks, laid in coursed ashlar bond. Portland cement mortar has been used to preserve the mortar on the original building. Window and door sills are 42 inch x 4 ½ inch limestone "lug" sills with smooth, dressed surfaces. The flat lintels over the exterior doors and windows are smooth-faced limestone, seven inches high, with six inch bearing on each side.

The original, small screened, wooden porch with wooden columns was removed from the front (western) elevation of the house and replaced with a wooden overhang in 1947. The lean-to porch (1880) on the northern elevation has been enclosed and is used as an office. A long, wood lean-to porch was built in 1880 and extended to thirty feet in 1908 to surround the thirty-two foot deep, four-foot wide, rock walled hand-dug well. The well remains under the current front porch (southern elevation), but is capped with a spring-locked wooden cover. The wooden floor of the porch was replaced with a cement foundation and a two and ½ feet high and ten inch wide field-stone wall in 1948. The wood rot was trimmed from the bottom of the five original Tuscan white wood pillars and remounted to the rock wall. A three foot wide cement walk exits the porch and runs the length of the porch, eastward to the driveway. The farmyard is separated from the front lawn gravel entrance to the farmstead by a three-foot field-stone wall. The various sized field-stones composition is from the local Glacial till.

The front door on the western elevation is five-paneled oak with 25" x 23" glass, and six inch transom over the door. The interior glass in the transom has been covered with plaster. The door from the house to the porch on the southern elevation now serves as the front door and is a five-panel oak door with 21" x 25" glass. A wood framed glass storm door covers the outside of the porch door. Both doors are set deeply back into the stone wall flush with the interior face of the wall.

The 1880 and 1908 porch additions which have been closed and now serve as utility room and office on the northern elevation. The exterior windows are 72 inches x 27 inches, set back two inches from the exterior face of the exterior walls, are 4/4, wooden, double-hung, with deep interior reveal with wood trim and wood sills. The ridge of the roof parallels the front of the house, runs north-south, and has a

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 3

Conrad Droge Farm
Nemaha Co., Kansas

twelve inch overhang on all sides. The ridge of the east wing is a secondary gable roof running east-west (1880 wing). The original roof was severely damaged by hail and replaced with a metal roof. The three original exterior chimneys were removed from the roof when the metal roof was installed.

The peaked roof stone barn graces the rural Kansas countryside much like other Northeast Kansas barns built when the German immigrants first arrived in the New World. Although in many other areas the big old barns continue to deteriorate and disappear from the agrarian landscape, this barn continues to serve as an important purpose as in bygone years. The 42 ft. x 52 ft. stone barn has an open, southern façade, second floor granary, and central wagon ramp and windmill. The original windmill was blown down in a storm.

The first floor of the barn is divided into equipment shed on the eastern elevation and livestock shelter on the western elevation. The central barn area has a sloping twelve-foot wide ramp. This large two story building was originally topped with a copula, but it was removed when the metal roof was installed. The barn is complete with hay storage in the loft, granaries, stalls for livestock, and a threshing area. Underneath that modern looking siding is an antique treasure, a stone barn of old world origins.

The fir interior framework beams for the stone house and barn were brought by horse and wagon from St. Joseph, Missouri, and are fastened with square headed nails and wooden dowels. Hay was loaded in past years into the barn through big loft doors at the northern end of the barn. Incessant winds necessitated low-sided sheds on the east and west as well as wind deflecting roofs.

The foundation of the house and barn are limestone rock blocks. A flagstone apron extends from the southern façade of the barn. Using feathers and wedges, Conrad Droge obtained rock from Wessler's Quarry, located two miles south of the ranch on Turkey Creek. Since limestone in this area is naturally formed in layers, the rock need only be chiseled and hammered to shape the stone for the walls into pitched-face blocks, which he laid in uniform courses, using a native lime and clay mix for mortar. Each limestone block has stonework that creates straight edges which allows the blocks to be put up in a straight line. With time, the lime and clay mortar deteriorated enough that birds built nests between the rocks. In 1948, Portland cement mortar was used to restore and preserve the mortar on the original buildings.

A cedar tree windbreak lines the northern boundary of the property where an acre of peach, walnut and mulberry trees once stood. The original frame chicken coop is now used as equipment sheds. The original work shed continues to be used for woodworking. The current owner Leslie Droge, has restored and preserved the historic German immigrant stone-buildings of his grandfather with creativity and ingenuity. Leslie Droge has expanded and developed the ranch into a prosperous venture while significantly influencing the lives of people in Nemaha County and the State of Kansas. Over the past 130 years, livestock of sheep, pigs and cattle have been raised on the ranch. Milo, soybeans, corn and

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 **Page** 4

Conrad Droge Farm
Nemaha Co., Kansas

wheat have been cultivated at various times. Times have changed over the past hundred and thirty years and farm needs have changed, too. Recreational vehicles, a tractor or two, and riding lawnmowers are now stored in the historic barn. The pastures and cultivated land are now leased by neighbors, but the Droge family descendants continue to own, maintain and live in the stone house and enjoy the farm.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 1

Conrad Droge Farm
Nemaha Co., Kansas

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Summary

The Conrad Droge Farm is being nominated to the Register of Historic Kansas Places under Criterion A for its depiction of the evolution of a rural Nemaha County farm settled by German immigrants.

History

The Conrad Droge Farm is historically important for its association with the Conrad Droge family and the immigration of Germans to Northeast Kansas. For most of the history of the state of Kansas, Germany had consistently maintained first place as a source of the Kansas foreign-born population. With the exception of 1860, 1870, and 1930, Germany's contribution has been approximately twice as large as that of any other nation, and even in those census years it had a substantial lead.

Delegates from all of the German colonies chose to send representatives to the United States to investigate land in Kansas, Nebraska and Arkansas. The first group of organized settlers left for Topeka in 1875. Upon arrival they were encouraged by the Kansas Pacific Railroad to settle on land owned by the railroad in Ellis and northern Rush counties. Large settlements also emerged in Russell County and North Topeka.

However, many Germans came into the state at the time the region was in the process of settlement but these settlers did not come as organized colonies. A settler with his family would move into this section from some other state, to the east or north. If he liked the country his friends in the "states" or in the "old country" heard of its advantages. Many of these friends would join him and presently a German community would be established. In these communities like Nemaha County, Kansas, they continued their native customs in the home and church but in community and business affairs they soon began to follow American folkways and traditions. As the years have come and gone and the second and third generations have established homes of their own, there has been a gradual merging of cultures within Northeast Kansas. Nemaha County continues to have one of the highest remaining concentrations of German ethnicity in the state of Kansas.

Conrad Droge (1844-1920) grew up in a family of stone-masons in Hanover, Germany. When the Prussian-dominated North German confederation was established in 1867, Conrad left Germany to escape further military service against neighboring states. He stayed awhile in Illinois where he secured a business education. With the call of the west upon him, he stopped awhile in Nemaha County, Kansas, and then went to Wyoming where the Union Pacific Railroad was being built. He was an overseer of a freighting crew carrying U.S. Army supplies between Fort Steele and Fort Laramie. On these trips he carried a Colt revolver with authority to use it as need arose.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 2

Conrad Droge Farm
Nemaha Co., Kansas

Conrad purchased the farm property in 1873 and built the original rock house and barn. The 130-year-old farmstead remains in the Droge family, retains the architectural integrity of the original property and is representative rural Northeast Kansas in the late 19th and early 20th Century. This home and barn are historically important since it represents the typical native limestone home with wooden frame additions built on as families expanded and experienced good farming years.

Ralph Tennal, in his 1916 publication, *History of Nemaha County, KS*, is quoted:

"During the fifty years of Conrad Droge's residence in America he has amassed a comfortable fortune and held one of the highest offices within the gift of the people of Nemaha County, Kans. Like other German immigrants to the United States, Mr. Droge landed on our hospitable shores a poor man, blessed with robust health and strength and imbued with an ambition to succeed. He has accomplished his desires and is now one of the old pioneer settlers of Kansas who has assisted in developing one of the best counties of a great State and taken his place among the leaders of his home county."

Conrad Droge was born in Hanover, Germany, January 14, 1844, and is a son of Henry and Louise (Bunnenberg) Droge, who lived and died in their native land and reared a family of three children, as follows: Henry, deceased; Conrad, the subject of this review; William a farmer in Pawnee County, Nebraska. Conrad Droge was reared on his father's farm in Hanover, Germany, and in 1866 crossed the ocean in search of fortune in America.

He worked as farm hand in Illinois for one year and then came to Seneca, Kansas. in 1867, where he was employed as laborer and clerked in a general store for four years. His desire had always been to own a farm of his own, and during his years of hard work at wages he carefully saved his money and in 1873 he invested his cash capital in 130 acres of unimproved land in section 4, Nemaha Township. During his first year on the farm he broke up part of it and built a shanty as a domicile. This shanty was soon superseded by a commodious stone house which makes his home today. He has added to his holdings until he now owns 370 acres of land in Kansas and Nebraska.

Mr. Droge was married on August 7, 1874, to Miss Sophia Poppe (age 16 years), and this marriage has resulted in the birth of nine children, six of whom are living, as follows: Emma, at home; William, a farmer in Nebraska; Henry, farming in Montana; Herbert, George and Freda, at home. Miss Poppe was also born in Hanover, Germany, on January 11, 1858. She was a daughter of Henry Poppe, (1883-1924), who left the Fatherland in 1870 with his family and settled in Nemaha County, Kansas.

Mr. Droge is a Republican and has always taken an active and influential part in political and civic affairs in Nemaha County. He was elected to the office of county

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 3

Conrad Droge Farm
Nemaha Co., Kansas

commissioner in 1893 on the Republican ticket and has served faithfully and capably for six years. He has also served the people of his township as trustee and school director and is usually found in the forefront of all good movements. He and Mrs. Droge and the children are members of the Evangelical Lutheran church and contribute of their substance to the support of this church. Mr. Droge is a member of the Ancient Free and Accepted Masons.

Conrad Droge received his naturalization papers in 1876. Conrad did much of the hard manual labor required to quarry and "square" the rock for the house and barn. George Droge helped his folks farm the land until 1917, when George was drafted for the army of World War I. Soon Conrad and Sophia Droge retired and moved to Dubois, Nebraska. Another son, Henry Droge, moved back to Kansas from Valley County, Montana to farm the home place.

Henry (Heinrick Ludwig) Droge (1883-1968) was married to Gertrude Beardeau (1888-1974) on March 21st, 1910. They rented Conrad Droge's Nebraska Farm where they farmed until 1914. Three children were born while living on the Nebraska farm: Emil, Helen and Margaret. The family then moved to Valley County, Montana and homesteaded for three and half years where Clarence (1915) and Leslie (1917) were born. When Leslie was six weeks old, the family moved back to Kansas to farm the home place. Henry and Gertrude Droge eventually had and raised eleven children.

Gertrude Beardeau Droge was born in Seneca, Kansas, on December 22, 1888, in a lean-to on the church located on the cemetery hill. Her father, Emil Beardau, was born on April 22, 1857, in Konigsburg East Prussia, a part of Germany. Her mother, Augusta Schupp, was born March 31, 1866, in Idar, Oberstein, Rhineland, Germany. They were married September 6th, 1887 in St. Louis, Missouri. Emil was a preacher and arrived in Northeast Kansas in 1887 to serve several churches in Nemaha County. To this marriage was born three children: Gertrude Elizabeth (1888), Elsie Emilie (1891), and John (1910).

Growing up on the farm was a joy for Leslie Droge. It was in the horse and buggy days with dirt and natural sod roads. Everyone used horses for transportation. The Drogés rode a couple of Morgan horses, but never could afford a saddle. The horses were used for pulling the buggy. The family heated rocks and rolled them in a gunnysack and placed them on the floorboards of the buggy to keep their feet warm in the winter when they went to town or church. Heated rocks were also placed in the beds for warmth during cold winter nights. Leslie keenly remembers his Grandpa Conrad Droge sitting on a kitchen stool and smoking a pipe. He remembered his grandpa's funeral.

In the twenties, the Droge family did all the farming with horses, a herd of sixteen work horses. A one bottom riding plow was pulled by three horses, and a two bottom riding plow was pulled by four horses. Normally they had one or two sets of good harnesses, and other sets were composed of a collar with harness and tugs attached, no bridle or pull back straps. When pulling a load on the road or going down

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 4

Conrad Droge Farm
Nemaha Co., Kansas

a hill, the horses would have to run to keep ahead of the load. This was dangerous and several Droge accidents did happen.

During the 1925 – 1940 years, the Droge family made molasses from cane on the Lazy D Ranch. The heads and leaves were cut off the farm-grown cane stalks with a corn knife and taken to the molasses mill that Henry Droge bought to squeeze the juice out of cane stalks. The mill was positioned on top of three heavy hedge posts that were set solid in the ground and the top was about six feet above the ground. A long hedge pole horizontally stuck out sixteen feet and was hitched to a horse which would walk around and around the mill. The cane stocks were started between two rollers which would then squeeze juice out into a ten gallon cream can. When it was full, it would be carried to the vat (a shallow tank three feet wide and ten feet long and one foot deep) under which was a fire. The juice was cooked before the scum was skimmed off the top with a screen. When the juice became thick and sticky like syrup, the molasses was dipped out and put in gallon jugs. The vat would be filled again and another batch would be ready in two or more days. Fifty to seventy-five gallons of molasses were made each year. The Drogues would also grind their own corn meal and wheat for bread using a horse-powered burr mill.

To feed a family of eleven children, beef and pork would be processed on the ranch each year. The beef would be butchered, skinned, and cut small portions for canning jars. The remaining beef would hang on the back porch so that the family could cut off portions for roasting or grinding. The two to six month old hogs would be killed, dressed, and boiled in a barrel of water. Using a block and tackle, the hog would be lowered into the boiling water until it was scalded enough to scrape all the hair off with a sharp knife. The ham and bacon slabs would be smoked over hickory wood in the back yard smoke house. Salt pork was made by soaking some cuts in a ten-gallon crock filled with salt brine and stored in the basement. A lard press was used to render and press the liquid lard out of the cooked fat cracklings. Head worst, blood worst and sausage were made. The small intestines of the hog were cleaned and filled with raw pork, the casings were tied with string every three or four inches so that they could be cut into short links.

Gertrude Droge raised nearly 300 turkeys each year. The family would have a turkey shoot each fall before Thanksgiving. Advertising would announce the date and time of the shoot, bringing the people of the community with their shot guns. They would shoot clay pigeons with the winner receiving a turkey as prize. The remaining turkeys were sold each year to a produce company. Chickens were raised each year which provided eggs to the Droge family. The roosters were fattened early, at about three pounds, keeping fifty fryers and selling the remaining chickens.

The one-acre peach orchard provided peaches for canning and sales at one dollar per bushel. Mulberries and gooseberries were abundant on the ranch each year. The Droge children would take sheets and blankets to lie under the Mulberry trees when the berries were ripe. They would climb the tress and shake every limb. When they finished they would remove the sticks and bugs that had been shaken into the sheets with the berries. The Droge family would go gooseberry picking and gather enough wild

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 5

Conrad Droge Farm
Nemaha Co., Kansas

gooseberries to keep the mulberries from spoiling when they were canned. They also picked wild strawberries, wild raspberries and wild choke cherries. The Drogos always cultivated a big garden of tomatoes, potatoes, cabbage and turnips each year. The potatoes were kept in the root cellar (basement) The cabbage was cut up, salted and weighted down in five and ten gallon crock containers. The turnips were kept under straw piles on the ground, which kept them from freezing.

The Henry Droge family planted corn (open pollinated), selected the best ears from the corn crib and hand shelled the ears to be used for seed. Corn was only worth about fifty cents per bushel, but today (2004) seed corn is hybrid and sells for about \$100 per bushel. During the five year drought in the early thirties, the family planted corn without raising any ears, just small stocks. The neighbors worked together and made corn cutting three wheeled carts that fit between the rows and were pulled with one horse between the two rows. It had a slanted knife on the front of each side, and about four to five inches above the ground. Two men set on a bench on the cart and grabbed the corn stalks as they were cut down by the horse and riders going through the field. Using three of these rigs, the families could cut a lot of corn in one day. Loose corn stalks would be picked up and loaded onto a flat bed hay rack and hauled to a silage cutter. The corn was unloaded by hand and the silage cutter would blow it into a silo or bunker silo. The silage cutter was run with a belt running to a stationary tractor with a power belt pulley. In addition to the tractor and silage cutter it took about three or four hay racks with teams of horses and driver plus about six men in the field loading wagons and six men and three riders who were cutting the corn. All these people had to be fed and that was the responsibility of the women folks. They worked together to feed the crew and it became a happy, social gathering.

Leslie started to the first grade at the Prairie Grove School (District #65), one mile west of the farm, in 1924. One teacher, Ethel Warner, taught all eight grades of forty students. The Droge children usually walked to school, but Leslie rode a horse to school one day because he was late from checking his traps along the creek into Nebraska. Leslie and his brother, Clarence, set traps for fur animals, skinned them and stretched the skin for a period of time. They sold the skins or pelts to the fur traders. They caught coyote, coon, mink, weasel, civet cat, skunk, possum, fox, muskrats, etc. Since the family milked fourteen to sixteen cows each morning and night, Leslie and Clarence took turns milking and checking traps.

Clarence and Leslie attended Dubois High School in the early thirties, participating in sports. On weekend and holidays, Clarence and Leslie cut wood and sold it for \$1.00 per load, which they hauled into town and unloaded wherever customers lived. They would cut trees down with a two man cross saw, trim the limbs off with axes, drag to a pile with a horse, then cut it in ten or fifteen feet lengths. They made several piles each year for three years to sell the next year since it took that long for the wood to dry. Leslie attended Seneca High School for his senior year of high school because the Dubois Nebraska school began to charge tuition. The Seneca High School paid Leslie to drive to the Griffith filling station where they caught a Seneca High School Bus each school morning. Leslie participated in

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 6

Conrad Droge Farm
Nemaha Co., Kansas

basketball and track. The remaining Droge children attended the Prairie Grove School and graduated from Seneca High School.

After high school graduation, Leslie Droge worked for a cousin in the summer and into the fall. After corn harvest, he joined the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) where he worked for thirty dollars a month. Leslie received five dollars per month which covered food, clothing, and housing and the rest went to his parents. Due to the extreme hard time in the thirties, President Roosevelt started the CCC to put young men to work, building dams, terraces, cutting fire wood, etc. Leslie was assigned to Company 2735 near Kelly, Kansas which was building the Nemaha County Lake Dam.

In August of 1937, Leslie Droge enrolled at Kansas State University and ROTC and graduated in 1941 with a Bachelor of Science degree. While at Kansas State, Leslie met his future wife, Lola Hubbard of Leoti, Kansas, at a young people's gathering at the Presbyterian Church in downtown Manhattan. They were married three years later on January 26th, 1941. Lola was brought up in a family of eleven children and accepted that there was no money for a honeymoon. They set up housekeeping in an apartment in Manhattan until graduation when Leslie was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant and instructed to report to the 63rd infantry 6th Division at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri with a stop at Ft. Leavenworth for a physical exam. His orders were dated 24 June, 1941.

When Leslie Droge returned from Japan after World War II, in December 1945, he and Lola, stayed with his parents on the Lazy D Ranch for a couple of months. During that time, Leslie applied for and was offered a coaching job at Wichita East High School, but before he accepted the position, his father Henry offered to sell him the original farm for fifty dollars per acre. Since Leslie Droge had a passion for farming and restoration of the historic buildings on the ranch, he decided to decline the coaching job. He accepted his father's offer. Henry and Gertrude Droge bought a house in Seneca, Kansas and lived there until they passed away.

Leslie farmed the 130-acre ranch and leased a second section of land. He bought 118 head of white face calves for twelve cents per pound for steers and eleven cents per pound for the heifers. He fed the cattle for one year and then sold them for twenty five cents per pound for the heifers and twenty six cents for the steers. He bought ten sows and one hundred chickens to raise and sell, but the hog and chicken ventures were unsuccessful. Instead, Leslie and Lola concentrated on the cattle business for about thirty-five years, buying about two hundred calves each year to feed and sell until they retired in 1977.

In 1957, he bought section nine for fifty dollars per acre. In 1966, he bought a place south of the ranch for sixty six dollars per acre, but reaped the crop that was on it. Leslie tore down the old school house (The Roger's School) on the new property and built a two car garage with the recycled lumber. Lola and Leslie took out all the old fences, made grass waterways, and terraced all the land that was cultivated. In 1984, Leslie put tile in waterways for moving the water underground and down the hill in place of grassed waterways. Leslie built nine ponds for watering the cattle, cleared dilapidated buildings and built the silo. Improvements were added to the house and barn. Leslie helped organize a Prairie

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 7

Conrad Droge Farm
Nemaha Co., Kansas

Grove School alumni group which until recently met annually. He has continued to maintain and preserve the Prairie Grove School house.

Lola and Leslie had five children, who continued the Droge tradition of growing up on the Lazy D Ranch. Lola and Leslie have been active in local and state organizations. Leslie served over fifteen years in the active Army reserves. He was elected in the fall of 1964 to the Kansas State Senate and served three four-year terms. Leslie Droge continues to work for preservation of the historic buildings and sites within Nemaha County. He has a passion for saving the history of the Kansas German immigrants, especially the Droge family traditions, for future generations.

The stone house and s are representative of the rural Northeast Kansas German settlements of 1800s – 1900s. The Germans who came from North Germany used a method of building called “fachwerk”, a method that didn't use much timber. Most of them had come from a part of Europe where there was considerable warfare over the years, fire, and extensive cultivation. Timber was actually in short supply. Obviously building an all wood house was an expensive undertaking. Most people didn't live in or build all wood houses. They built “fachwerk” which utilized wood for the framework or the skeleton of the building, and used another material such as stone for the rest of the wall to make it solid. This type of architecture and construction is found in the rock house and barn on the Lazy D Ranch.

Stone barns and houses of all sizes and shapes have graced the rural American countryside ever since German immigrants first arrived in the New World. Although in many areas today the big old barns and houses, built 100 years or more ago, continue to deteriorate and disappear from the Kansas landscape.

When settlers first arrived in America, they brought stone building knowledge, methods and ideas with them. However, according to Eric Sloane in his book “An Age of Barns,” these new Americans began to use their barns as multi-purpose structures, something not done before in the Old World. Not only did the American immigrants house livestock in these buildings, but they also used barns for a variety of other functions, including storing hay, threshing grain, hanging tack and for a place to root cellar vegetables. Barn structures changed accordingly, to encompass this increased demand. Walls increased in height and roofs had less slant.

Immigrants to America had an abundant supply of lumber and stone, so many log barns, plank barns and stone barns soon dotted the country. Pennsylvania farmers, many of them from German descent, developed several distinctive types of barn structures, built from log or stone. Bank barns, often built into a hillside, became extremely popular. These barns, with overhead hay storage and animal stalls below, evolved with many variations. Variations ranged from single level structures to large two or more story buildings complete with hay storage in the loft, granaries, stalls for livestock, a threshing area, and dry cellars for storage of turnips, potatoes and horse feed.

Conrad Droge piled loose hay in the lofts of his barn to feed the teams and milk cows at night and over the winter. Most farms today no longer have one or two milk cows that come in twice a day for milking, nor do farmers have teams of oxen, mules, or horses to work the land. Livestock owners, therefore,

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 **Page** 8

Conrad Droge Farm
Nemaha Co., Kansas

don't require the types of stalls that farmers required 100 years ago, nor do they necessarily need hay and grain stored within easy reach inside the barn walls. Today's farmers use large round bales, large square bales, or less frequently the small square bales to feed livestock, and they stack this hay in an easily accessible place for winter feeding. The barn loft no longer serves as that easily accessible storage place, particularly with the change in bale sizes and shapes and with cattle living on winter pasture, rather than in or near a barn.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 1

Conrad Droge Farm
Nemaha Co., Kansas

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Clark, Carroll D. and Roberts, Roy L. *People of Kansas, A Demographic and Sociological Study*, Kansas State Planning Board, National Reserve Building, Topeka, Kansas. 1936, pp. 52-53.

Cutler, William G. *History of the State of Kansas*, A.T. Andreas, Chicago, IL. 1883, 940-990.

Haynes, Emma Schwabenland. *The Volga Relief Society, German Immigrants - A Kansas Portrait*, page 23.

History of Dubois Nebraska and Vicinity: Pawnee County Historical Society, 1954.

History of the Droge Family, written and compiled by Leslie Droge, 2003.

Kocher, Leo. Winds Aloft, Quarterly newsletter of the 511th Parachute Infantry Regiment Association: 541st Parachute Infantry, Interview with Col. Leslie Droge, pp 23-32.

McAlester, Lee and Virginia. *A Field Guide to American Homes*. A. A. Knopf, New York, 2004. pp 118-119.

Muilenburg, Grace and Swineford, Ada. *Land of The Post Rock, Its Origins, History, and People*. The University Press of Kansas, 1979.

Nemaha County, *Kansas Pictorial Album, Pictorial County Albums*, McPherson, Kansas 67460; 1973.

Nemaha County Appraiser: Legal description and USGS map

Nemaha County Clerk; township maps

Nemaha County Kansas, USDA Soil Survey, Soil Conservation Service, KAES, February, 1982.

Nemaha County Register of Deeds; deed

Reflections of Nemaha County, Kansas. Curtis Media Corp, Dallas, Texas. 1992.

Sandehn, Nancy, Preservation Planner. *A Report on the Cultural Resources of Nemaha County, Kansas*; Glacial Hills R.C. & D. Inc. and The Nemaha County Historical Society, MoKan Regional Council, 1992.

Seneca Courier, December 8, 1871

Seneca Courier-Democrat, July 23, 1900

Seneca Courier-Tribune, October 24, 1963.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 2

Conrad Droge Farm
Nemaha Co., Kansas

Sloane, Eric. *Age of Barns: An Review of Barn Styles and Construction*; Voyageur Press -
September 2001

Tennal, Ralph. *History of Nemaha County, KS*, Lawrence, KS; Standard Publishing Co. 1916. pp. 522-
523

The Golden Jubilee of German-Russian Settlements of Ellis and Rush Counties, KS, August 31, 1926.

Carley, Rachel. *The Visual Dictionary of American Domestic Architecture*. H. Holt and Co., New York.
1997. Pp. 36-40.

Wichita Eagle, *German Ancestry Falls Slightly But Remains Top Kansas Ethnicity*. May 26, 2002, Page
2B.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 **Page** 1

Conrad Droge Farm
Nemaha Co., Kansas

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated is located on property located in the SW4 less N 990 – W2-SW4 & Less, Section 4, Township 15, Range 12 East in Nemaha County, Kansas. The property is two miles west of Kansas Highway 63 on Township Road “223”, and north ½ mile on Township Road “T”.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

This nomination includes all of the buildings and land on the original 130 acre farmstead.